

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Fidel Castro on communist leadership and strategy today
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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War college: need troops in U.S. for ‘civil unrest’

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A recent report from the U.S. Army War College discusses the need for the Pentagon to deploy U.S. troops on domestic soil to quell civil unrest as the economic crisis worsens. Titled “Known Unknowns: Unconventional ‘Strategic Shocks’ in Defense Strategy Development,” the document was written by Nathan Freier, a retired army lieutenant colonel who is a professor at the college.

Freier emphasizes that the likeliest and most dangerous “future shocks” are “outside the realm of traditional warfighting.” They will be “nonmilitary in origin and character,” referring to the resistance the U.S. rulers know is coming by working people as economic and social conditions worsen.

“Widespread civil violence inside

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Worldwide production slides, jobs slashed

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The worldwide contraction in industrial production deepened in December, jeopardizing the jobs and livelihoods of millions of workers.

U.S. manufacturing activity fell to its lowest point since 1980, according to the Institute for Supply Management.

In the United Kingdom manufacturing dropped for the eighth consecutive month. In Sweden it plunged at the fastest rate in 14 years. Overall manufacturing in countries that use the euro dropped in December to the lowest level in the currency’s 11-year history.

Manufacturing fell to its lowest level since 1997 in Russia and in China it declined for the fifth straight month.

Toyota announced it will post an annual operating loss for the first time since it began reporting in 1941. The

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New Jersey unionist released from jail, fights deportation

BY MIKE TABER

NEWARK, New Jersey—Moisés Mory, a Peruvian immigrant fighting deportation, was released on parole from Hudson County Jail on January 2, after four and a half years of detention. He still faces the threat of deportation by the government.

A resident of the United States for almost three decades, Mory, 53, filed for permanent residency in 1984. But in 1999 the immigration cops began their efforts to deport him based on a 1986 misdemeanor conviction. Jailed for a year in 1999, he eventually won his release when an immigration judge dropped the deportation proceedings.

But immigration authorities continued their efforts against him, and he was arrested again in May 2004. At that time Mory was president of Local 13742 of the United Steelworkers

of America and a machine operator at a plastics factory in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

In an interview with the *Militant* two days after his release, Mory stated that he had become a “headache” for the immigration authorities. Despite their attempts to break his spirit and force him to accept deportation, “they couldn’t stop me. I became a problem for them,” he said.

Throughout his imprisonment, Mory refused to accept the many arbitrary acts committed against him, filing a steady stream of lawsuits and complaints to protest every violation of his rights. Especially annoying to the immigration cops, Mory said, was his work with other detainees helping them do the same.

Moreover, Mory said, another factor was “the pressure” the immigration authorities felt as a result of the ongoing support for his fight, which was covered in a number of Spanish-language newspapers.

Mory told the *Militant* that his program of political reading while in prison helped him maintain his perspective. He was especially inspired by reading Nelson Mandela’s dignified speeches in the courtrooms of apartheid South Africa, and sought to model his own conduct on that.

Still under a deportation order, Mory reiterated his determination to fight to remain in the United States together with his wife Ruth, a U.S. citizen. Expressing gratitude to everyone who helped win his release, Mory is preparing for the next stage in the battle.



Militant/Mike Fitzsimmons

Moisés Mory being interviewed by *Militant* correspondents in New Jersey this month.

Israeli troops out of the Gaza Strip now!



Reuters

Israeli tanks and armored personnel carriers staged along the northern border of Gaza. The near-two-week siege there has left over 600 dead and 2,900 wounded.

Hundreds in Gaza killed in assault

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands of Israeli soldiers backed by tanks invaded the Gaza Strip January 4 after eight days of devastating strikes by sea, air, and land. Washington openly backs the invasion and has opposed any attempts to pressure the Israeli government to call a halt to the attacks.

At least 430 Palestinians had been killed and 2,200 wounded in some 750 air sorties from F-16 bombers and Apache helicopters before the start of the ground invasion. As of January 7 the toll had risen to more than 600 dead and 2,900 wounded.

According to the United Nations, 25

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For a democratic, secular Palestine!

Working people worldwide should demand that Israeli troops immediately withdraw from the Gaza Strip and stop the bombing. Open all border crossings into Gaza and lift the economic blockade, so vitally needed

EDITORIAL

medical supplies and food can get through.

We must also demand that Washington end its massive aid to Israel. The U.S. government played a major role in establishing the state of Israel in 1948 on land that belonged to Pal-

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Five immigrants convicted in Fort Dix frame-up trial

BY RUTH ROBINETT

CHERRY HILL, New Jersey—On December 23 five immigrants framed up on charges of plotting to attack Fort Dix in New Jersey were convicted of conspiracy to kill U.S. soldiers. They were acquitted on a charge of attempted murder. The men could face life imprisonment when they are sentenced in April.

The defendants were all in their twenties when arrested in May 2007. They live in Cherry Hill, a New Jersey suburb of Philadelphia. Mohamad Shnewer, originally from Jordan, drove a taxi in Philadelphia. Three brothers—Eljvir Duka, Dritan Duka, and Shain Duka—are ethnic Albanians from the former Yugoslavia who ran a roofing business. Serdar Tatar is from Turkey and worked in a convenience store in Philadelphia.

The five were denied bail and have been held at the Federal Detention Center in Philadelphia in a special unit where they are allowed one tele-

phone call a month.

The government charge that the five had conspired to attack Fort Dix was based on hundreds of hours of secretly taped conversations between defendants and two FBI informants over 15 months.

One of the informants, Mahmoud Omar, had been found guilty of

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Workers at Petro-Canada win long contract battle

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL—After more than 13 months on the picket line, members of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union of Canada (CEP) Local 175 won their battle with Petro-Canada. The 260 members of the union defeated the company’s attempt to impose on workers at its Quebec refinery a contract inferior to those at its refineries in Alberta, British Columbia, and Ontario.

Petro-Canada had locked out the unionists on Nov. 17, 2007. On December 23, 94.6 percent of the workers voted to accept the three-year contract. Management had sought to impose a six-year contract.

Spirits were high at the meeting, and workers were proud of what they had accomplished. “We won,” many workers commented to *Militant* reporters on their way in and out of the meeting. “We’re very proud of ourselves to have rejected Petro-Canada’s offer after 10 months of lockout,” CEP member Gino, who wanted to give only his first name, told the *Militant*. On September 24, Local 175 members were forced by the Quebec Labor Relations Board to vote at Petro-Canada’s request on its latest offer—one that refused to grant workers in Quebec wage parity with refinery workers across Canada.

Richard Ingram, with 30 years seniority at Petro-Canada, told the *Militant* “I’ve never seen the union so strong. We united younger and older workers who didn’t know each other before. We fought hard and worked hard.” Alessandro Ranalletta, a field

operator with three years in the plant agreed, “I have never experienced a strike. I learned a lot in 13 months. I didn’t think about the union before. I learned why the union is important. We all stuck together. You need the union in emergencies. The younger people need it.”

In addition to maintaining around-the-clock picket lines throughout the course of the long lockout, CEP Local 175 also reached out to the labor movement and other groups for solidarity. Union members publicized the CEP campaign to boycott Petro-Canada and sought donations and messages of support. Hundreds of union locals and labor federations sent solidarity messages and contributed funds to the foundation set up by Local 175 for the lockout.

Jim Upton, a member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Lodge 869 at Rolls-Royce Canada in Montreal, told the *Militant* that two locked out Petro-Canada workers attended their December 15 union meeting. They explained



Militant/Beverly Bernardo

Locked-out Petro-Canada workers picket company February 2008

how the bosses got a court injunction limiting picketing to two of the 11 entrances to the refinery with no more than five workers allowed on the picket line at any one time. They also described constant harassment on the line by company-hired security guards and local cops.

“We’re fighting for our dignity,” one explained, “and we’re prepared to continue that fight. But we need your financial help to be able to do that.” In response, the IAM workers voted to

donate \$500.

After members voted to accept the contract, Local 175 expressed its gratitude on its Web site. “Thank you to the CEP and the CLC [Canadian Labor Congress] and all our brothers and sisters, affiliated or not, for your solidarity. Thank you for your support.” The unionists return to work on January 12.

John Steele and Jim Upton contributed to this article.

U.S. Army report discusses quelling civil unrest

Continued from front page

the United States would force the defense establishment to reorient priorities in extremis to defend basic domestic order and human security,” the report states. It gives as examples cases of “unforeseen economic collapse, loss of functioning political and legal order, purposeful domestic resistance or insurgency, pervasive public health

emergencies,” and “catastrophic natural and human disasters.”

The report further states, “An American government and defense establishment lulled into complacency by a long-secure domestic order would be forced to rapidly divest some or most external security commitments in order to address rapidly expanding human insecurity at home.”

The report fits into the line of march the U.S. rulers have been on over the past decade since the William Clinton administration set up the Joint Task Force–Civil Support in October 1999 as a “homeland defense command.” In 2002 the Pentagon established the U.S. Northern Command, charged with carrying out military operations within the United States.

Prior to this, under the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, the U.S. armed forces had been barred from domestic operations, except in specific, limited circumstances. Pentagon officials are

now projecting some 20,000 active-duty U.S. troops to be stationed in the United States by 2011.

In mid-December International Monetary Fund Managing Director Dominique Strauss-Kahn warned of economic and social unrest spreading “in various global markets if the financial crisis is not addressed and lower-income households are hurt by credit constraints and rising unemployment,” reported the *Phoenix Business Journal*. The *Journal* reported that state and local police in Arizona have plans to respond to such unrest, including that resulting from the economic crisis.

In 2003 Arizona governor Janet Napolitano sent National Guard troops to the Palo Verde nuclear power plant. Her office released a statement at the time saying the action was in response to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security request. Napolitano is president-elect Barack Obama’s nominee to head the Department of Homeland Security.

THE MILITANT

Follow the resistance by workers

As layoffs mount, workers are seeking ways to defend themselves. Recently workers at Chicago’s Republic Windows and Doors occupied the plant and won back pay and benefits after they were laid off. Don’t miss these and other stories in the ‘Militant.’



Workers sit in at Republic Windows and Doors in Chicago, December 2008.

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Iran: oil prices fall, gov't to cut energy subsidies

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The contraction of the world capitalist economy and the plunge in oil prices are having severe effects in Iran.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is calling for slashing government subsidies for fuel and other basic necessities to compensate for the sharp decline in oil revenues. Ahmadinejad had previously said Iran would be immune to the world economic crisis.

Oil, which accounts for 80 percent of Iran's foreign exchange revenues, dropped below \$40 a barrel in late December, down from \$147 last July. The Iranian stock market lost 18 percent of its value between October and December.

Compounding these challenges are the extensive sanctions imposed on Iran by the United Nations and by the U.S. government on the pretext that Tehran continues to pursue enrichment of uranium. The United Nations imposed sanctions in December 2006 instructing countries to cease trade in materials or technology that could aid Iran's nuclear or missile program and to freeze the assets of several Iranian companies and individuals. U.S. sanctions prohibit nearly all trade with Iran.

Iran's current inflation rate is between 25 and 30 percent, the highest in the Middle East, according to the Central Bank of Iran.

While the official unemployment rate is about 10 percent, this figure does not appear to include the many workers unable to find full-time jobs, which would make the actual jobless rate far higher. The Fars news agency reported December 21, for example, that 400,000 rural women workers have lost their jobs due to drought conditions.

The Tehran daily *Sarmaye* (Capital) reported December 31 that unlike previous years at this time, the textile industry is dormant this year. It reported that many textile factories are shutting down or are working way below capacity.

Ahmadinejad submitted a bill to parliament December 30 that would eliminate subsidies for heating oil, gas, electricity, and water over the next three years. Many of these subsidies, established after the 1979 revolution that overturned the U.S.-backed shah, are substantial. Gasoline, for example, costs just 36 cents a gallon.

Basic foods are also subsidized. Milk is 20 cents a quart. Prices of food

went up at least 35 percent last September alone, according to the *Wall Street Journal*.

Some 60 percent of the money the government saves by eliminating subsidies is supposed to be paid out in monthly cash handouts to low- and middle-income families. The bill also projects expanding public transit, job creation, and development of non-oil exports.

When Ahmadinejad first proposed these measures last year, he also called for stricter enforcement of sales taxes. In July 2008 the government had announced plans to institute a 3 percent sales tax. Merchants reacted in September by launching strikes and demonstrations in several cities. Ahmadinejad retreated, postponing the tax for a year.

Similarly, when the government restricted subsidized gasoline purchases to 30 gallons a month in 2007, spontaneous protests erupted in Tehran during which demonstrators burned gas stations.

Iranian Central Bank deputy director Ramin Pashaifam warned that eliminating energy subsidies would increase inflation. Parliament member Emad Hosseini said Ahmadinejad's bill "will cause widespread unemployment, bankrupt big industries, and reduce the purchasing power of the people," according to the Associated Press.

Ahmadinejad argues the subsidies have only helped the rich and says his new plan would "apply justice and eradicate discrimination."

Presidential elections are coming next June and several capitalist candidates are already in the running. Ahmadinejad has not announced, but is expected to seek a second term.

With the economic crisis intensi-

Texas socialist campaign office vandalized



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

HOUSTON—Campaign volunteer Steve Warshell inspects a broken window at the office of the Socialist Workers 2009 Houston Campaign, which was attacked in the early morning hours of December 19. Three other offices in the same complex were also attacked.

"The Socialist Workers campaign will not be intimidated by attacks on our headquarters," explained Amanda Ulman, a garment worker and the SWP candidate for mayor of Houston. "We will be seeking ballot status, looking for every opportunity to reach out with a working-class platform."

The campaign demands police conduct a thorough investigation and apprehend those responsible for the attack.

—JACQUIE HENDERSON

fying and the potential for political instability growing, some bourgeois forces that have been bitter rivals in the past are exploring the possibility of a joint slate, the *Arab American News* reported December 26. According to the paper, "The moderate conservatives, led by former President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, and reformists, led by former President Mohammed Khatami, are trying to agree on a 'national unity candidate' to run against Ahmadinejad. Rafsanjani is now supporting Khatami as the candidate . . ."

Khatami was president of Iran from

1997 to 2005. Initially he was popular with working people who saw him as someone who would open up political space and end restrictions on democratic rights, but he failed to deliver on that front and economic conditions for the toilers steadily worsened.

Urban and rural poor, in protest against well-heeled, established politicians, voted for Ahmadinejad in 2005. He campaigned with populist promises to fight government corruption and use the country's oil wealth to increase wages and social benefits for working people and grant zero-percent loans to farmers.

Five immigrants convicted in frame-up trial

Continued from front page

bank fraud and was facing immigration charges when the FBI recruited him in 2006. He was paid more than \$230,000 to spy on the five men.

Besnik Bakalli, the other informant, was wanted for a shooting in Albania and was awaiting deportation when agents plucked him from a Pennsylvania jail, paying him about \$150,000 during the undercover operation.

The informants encouraged the men to watch al-Qaeda videos and pressed them to take action.

The prosecution presented no evidence of illegal acts. Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Hammer explained to the court that under conspiracy charges the government does not have to prove the defendants all discussed or agreed on a plan to attack, or that there was a specific plan. They must only prove intent. He told the court "just talk is powerful evidence."

In an interview here, Anan Shnewer, Mohamed's sister, said, "this was a case based on lies. The court didn't allow all the facts to be presented and the quotes from the tapes were selected. Why didn't the jury hear Shain, Eljivir, and Dritan say 'it is forbidden to kill soldiers'?"

Farik Duka, the Duka brothers' father, pointed to another problem

with the tapes. "The translations were wrong," he said. He gave as an example the government's translation of the Albanian word "hak" as vengeance. The word can have other meanings including "something due, remuneration, and reason," according to Albanian dictionaries. In this case it meant "justice," he said.

The men's lawyers attacked the credibility of the FBI informants and accused them of instigating the plot.

Shnewer's attorney, Rocco Cipparone, said that there would not have been a conspiracy without the involvement of the informants. "I believe they shaped the evidence," he told the press after the verdict.

Cipparone explained to the court in closing arguments that Omar, who is 38 years old, showered Shnewer with attention and advice like an older brother, and often berated him for not taking action. In 2006 Omar told Shnewer, "We've been talking about this matter for three months. Start taking some steps. That's it."

Faten Shnewer, Mohamed's mother, said in an interview, "This is not justice! My son was pushed and intimidated. It was just talk. He never even returned Omar's telephone calls. He did not kill anybody."

Jim Sues, executive director of the New Jersey chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said, "Many people in the Muslim community will see this as a case of entrapment. From what I saw, there was a significant role played by the government informant."

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA Miami

The Deepening Government Attacks on Workers' Rights. Fri., Jan. 16. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 6777 NW 7th Ave. Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

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Meet 2009 Socialist Workers Party Candidates for Des Moines City Council. Speakers: Candidates Rebecca Williamson and David Rosenfeld. Fri., Jan. 16. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 3707 Douglas Ave. Tel.: (525) 225-1707.

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by Jack Barnes

• **Their Transformation and Ours**
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Workers' Rights Versus the Secret Police

How, since the inception of the modern revolutionary workers movement in 1848, the ruling classes have responded with police spies, agents provocateurs, and political frame-ups.

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Gaza invasion sparks international protests

BY WILLIE COTTON

NEW YORK—Waving Palestinian flags along with many handmade signs, some 5,000 demonstrators marched for several hours in New York City from Time Square to Israel’s UN mission January 3 to protest the Israeli assault on the Gaza Strip.

The protest, organized by the Arab Muslim American Federation, Al-Awda, Muslim American Society youth center, International Action Center, and others, drew people mostly from New York and New Jersey, but also from Connecticut and Pennsylvania. It included many high school and college youth.

Many congregations at mosques in New Jersey chartered buses to come to the action. Some Puerto Rican and Dominican political activists participated in the march as well as others who were outraged at the one-sided Israeli assault.

Some demonstrators brought their family, including Naif Oden, who came with his 11 children. “This is the least we could do,” he said. “There is no justice. No human rights. It is a massacre.”

“My friend was telling me about the demonstration and I wanted to see for myself,” said Andre Smith, a 20-year-old meat packer at the march.

Dan Fein, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of New York, joined the march. “Mayor Michael Bloomberg is in Israel to show his support for Tel Aviv’s assault. But I am here as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor to oppose the bombing and invasion, to demand an immediate end to U.S. aid to Israel, and to show solidarity with the Palestinian people,” he said.

At the beginning of the demonstration about 50 supporters of the Israeli assault staged a counterprotest.

Some 800 marched January 3 in Boston to protest the Israeli bombing. Demonstrations of about 500 took place in Washington, D.C., on January 2 and in Seattle and Atlanta on January 3. Protests were also organized in other cities across the United States from Houston to Des Moines, Iowa.



BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—More than 3,000 people, including many Lebanese and other Middle Eastern immigrants, marched through the center of Sydney January 4 protesting the Israeli bombing of the Palestinian population of Gaza.

Similar demonstrations took place in Melbourne and Brisbane.

A lead banner demanded, “Stop Israeli terrorism” while another, in the red, black, white, and green colors of the Palestinian flag, said “End the Israeli occupation! Free Palestine!”

Chants included “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!” and “No justice, no peace! U.S. out of the Middle East!” Some 3,000 also demonstrated outside the U.S. consulate in Sydney December 29.



BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

MONTREAL—Some 5,000 people marched in the streets here January 4 to demand that Israel end its assault against the Gaza Strip. Chanting “Israel assassins; Harper complicit” the protesters also condemned the Canadian government of Stephen Harper for supporting Israel.

In Toronto several thousand people took to the streets January 3. Also that day, more than 500 braved icy winds to attend an action on Parliament Hill in Ottawa and protest actions were held in Vancouver and Winnipeg. In Edmonton nearly 500 protested January 4.



BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Carrying placards demanding, “Stop the massacre in Gaza; Boycott Israel now,” some 350 people marched from the U.S. consulate here December 30 through the city’s center. Young Palestinians formed the front ranks of the march, chanting, “Free, free Palestine!”

Hundreds killed in assault on Gaza Strip

Continued from front page
percent of the casualties are civilians, including hundreds of children.

Just hours after saying it looked “favorably” on a French-Egyptian proposal that would meet many of Tel Aviv’s demands, the Israeli Security Cabinet voted January 7 to prepare for stepping up the assault.

Tel Aviv claims it launched the “shock and awe” attacks to stop Hamas from firing missiles into Israel. This is not the first time the Israeli government has used Hamas missiles as a pretext to attack Gaza. In February 2008, the Israeli Defense Forces killed 120 Palestinians in six days of air and ground assaults.

While Hamas leaders have issued defiant statements, most of its top leaders are in hiding. There are few indications that Hamas had organized to prepare Palestinian civilians in advance of the Israeli assault.

Gaza residents who obeyed leaflets dropped by Israeli planes ordering them leave their homes in northern Gaza or risk death were shelled by the Israeli army at their new shelter near the Jabalya refugee camp.

Hamas spokesperson Ismail Radwan said on the group’s al-Aqsa TV that Gaza would “become a graveyard” for Israeli soldiers. But Hamas’s military capabilities are limited, with virtually no antiaircraft defenses or advanced weaponry.

Hamas and its allies have fired nearly 7,000 rockets since 2005—as many as 200 a day—most of them wildly inaccurate home-made rockets known as Qassams with a range of just four miles, killing 13 Israeli civilians. They have continued to fire rockets at Israeli towns in the midst of the assault, including some missiles with a reach of 25 miles, but no greater accuracy.

Israeli attack planned for years

According to *Haaretz*, a prominent daily in Israel, the Israeli Defense Forces prepared for “Operation Cast Lead” for almost two years. Preparations for the attack were stepped up more than six months ago while the Israeli government was in negotiations with Hamas for what became a six-month cease-fire agreement.

The *Jerusalem Post* reported January 5 that all the Israeli units deployed in Gaza underwent training that included operations in a mock-Palestinian city.

“We built models for them of places



Militant/Nancy Boyasko

Some 5,000 people marched in New York City January 3 to protest assault on Gaza Strip

inside Gaza,” an officer told the *Post*. “There are places that replicate city outskirts, the casbah marketplaces and over-populated refugee camps.”

After Israeli forces killed six Hamas fighters in a November 4 raid in Gaza, Hamas resumed firing rockets into Israel. Hamas officially repudiated the cease-fire December 19.

On November 5 the Israeli government tightened a 16-month-long economic blockade of the Gaza Strip. To the north and east is Israel, to the south Egypt; the Mediterranean Sea forms its western border. The Israeli government has built fences and walls along its entire border with Gaza.

More than half of Gaza’s 1.5 million residents depend on food provided by the United Nations and the World Food Programme.

The blockade of food, medicine, fuel, cooking gas, parts for water systems, fertilizer, plastic sheeting, paper, glue, and shoes was tightened after November 5. The Israeli government forced the UN to cut back from 15 trucks of food a day to only one or two. Gaza is dependent on Israel for 70 percent of its electricity.

Except for allowing in limited humanitarian aid and a few hundred Gaza residents with foreign passports to leave, Israel has closed all border crossings with Gaza.

Tel Aviv has also bombed many of hundreds of tunnels that were built between Egypt and Gaza to skirt the blockade, bringing in food and medicine as well as arms for Hamas.

Israel occupied the Gaza Strip for 38 years, after capturing the territory from Egypt in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and only withdrew its forces in September 2005. Hamas has been the ruling party there since it defeated Fatah in the 2006 elections to the Palestinian parliament.

In June 2007 in open fighting Hamas pushed out forces loyal to Fatah, which is still the dominant party in the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank.

Arab governments blame Hamas

The Egyptian government, with the backing of Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas, has kept the Rafah crossing into Egypt closed. Demonstrators in Cairo denounced this de facto complicity with the Israeli assault.

At a meeting of the Arab League in Cairo, Saudi Arabia’s foreign minister, Prince Saud al-Faisal, implicitly put the

blame on Hamas for the Israeli attacks, a position shared by Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak and the Jordanian government.

Hamas leaders have said they will agree to a cease-fire and stop firing missiles, if the Israeli government lifts the embargo and reopens border crossings.

But Tel Aviv has refused. The Israeli government says it is not seeking to permanently reoccupy Gaza or return to a vision of a Greater Israel. Instead it seeks a longer lasting agreement with Hamas on more favorable terms for the Israeli rulers.

Gen. Eitan Ben Eliyahu, former chief of the Israeli air force, said the goal is “to suppress the sites where they launch the rockets into our home front” and “to tighten the ring of pressure around the Hamas leadership, which helps you conduct your negotiations in the diplomatic field.”

The French-Egyptian cease-fire proposal includes deploying combat engineers to block off tunnels, and an international naval force to patrol Gaza’s coast. A top aide to Israeli defense minister Ehud Barak is traveling to Cairo for talks, which will begin January 8.

Washington backs Israel’s invasion

Washington has openly backed the Israeli assault. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said that the United States “holds Hamas responsible for breaking the cease-fire and for the renewal of violence in Gaza.”

“If somebody was sending rockets into my house, where my two daughters sleep at night, I’m going to do everything in my power to stop that,” U.S. president-elect Barack Obama told reporters during a July visit to Sderot, Israel, on the edge of Gaza. “And I would expect Israelis to do the same thing.”

Washington gives some \$2.4 billion a year to Israel, more than to any other government in the world.

Thousands of Israelis protested in Tel Aviv against the invasion of Gaza January 3. That same day in the northern Israeli town of Sakhnin more than 10,000 Arab-Israelis demonstrated against the assault on Gaza, one of the largest demonstrations inside Israel in years.

In Morocco, 50,000 marched in the capital Rabat to protest the Israeli offensive. In a stadium in Amman, Jordan, 30,000 joined a protest action.

NY: 50 years of Cuban Revolution celebrated

BY NANCY BOYASKO
AND OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK—More than 250 gathered at a ballroom in Spanish Harlem on New Year's Eve to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Cuban Revolution with a dinner and dance.

The event was organized by a coalition of Cuban solidarity organizations and other political groups. They came together at the initiative of Casa de las Américas, an organization that has played a key role for five decades in building solidarity in New York with Cuba's socialist revolution.

Cuban immigrants, who were in their majority factory and restaurant workers, founded Casa in 1957. They organized opposition to Washington's support to the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista and participated in activities in support of the Cuban Revolution following Batista's overthrow.

Nancy Cabrero, president of Casa, opened the brief program. "The triumph of the Cuban Revolution empowered the oppressed people of the world and rekindled a hope for free-

dom," she said in welcoming everyone.

She introduced Abelardo Moreno Fernández, Cuba's new ambassador to the United Nations. A former deputy foreign minister of Cuba, Moreno expressed his great pleasure that the 50th anniversary celebration was his first public appearance as Cuba's ambassador to the United Nations.

Moreno explained that the Cuban people had faced difficulties in the last year after being hit by three devastating hurricanes. "At the same time," he said, "it has been a wonderful time for us, because of the failure of the U.S. government's policy to isolate the Cuban Revolution."

Moreno pointed to Cuba's relations and cooperation with governments throughout the Americas, and Cuba's active participation in various Latin American and Caribbean bodies, including the first Latin American and Caribbean summit to take place without foreign participation. "Cuba has survived because of the sacrifice of the Cuban people and the solidarity we have won from people like you," he said.

Cabrero also recognized from the podium the Venezuelan embassy delegation that came to the celebration.

Among those who joined in the festivities were many of the long-time cadres of Casa, including Ar-

Revolution's 50th anniversary celebrated in Cuba



Above: Mamo photo/Getty Images/Sven Creutzmann

Cuban president Raúl Castro (inset) addressed a meeting (above) January 1 of more than 3,000 people in the island's eastern city of Santiago de Cuba to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. "Today, the Revolution is stronger than ever; it has never failed to stand by its principles, not even in the most difficult circumstances," Castro told the gathering. "Revolutions can only advance and endure when they are carried forward by the people."

—BRIAN WILLIAMS



Militant/Dan Fein

Abelardo Moreno Fernández, Cuba's ambassador to United Nations, speaks at celebration in New York on Dec. 31, 2008.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 20, 1984

On Dec. 27, 1983, U.S. Steel Corp. announced a devastating new wave of plant closings and permanent layoffs. The nation's largest steel corporation will cut its steelmaking capacity 16 percent by closing eight plants completely and cutting back operations at many others. Some 15,400 steelworkers will lose their jobs for good.

The impact of the decision will be widely felt, as some 30 different U.S. Steel operations will be affected. In addition to the toll on steelworkers and their families, entire cities and towns that are economically dependent on the steel industry will be hard hit.

Sharp international competition in the steel industry is an important fact in the crisis of profits that U.S. Steel and others are trying to solve at steelworkers' expense.



January 19, 1959

The Belgian government is slated to issue a policy statement today promising some form of eventual "self rule" for the Belgian Congo. Meanwhile it is moving swiftly in an effort to crush the long-smoldering Congolese independence movement that dramatically broke into the open Jan. 5 when colonial police forcibly broke up a native political rally in the capital city of Leopoldville. Mass unemployment and the recent conference at Accra calling for freedom and a United States of Africa gave powerful impetus to the demand for an end to colonial rule.

The police attack on the rally, under pretext it was "unauthorized," brought two days of bitter demonstration and battle. Crying "Belgians go home," the Congolese threw up street barricades against the machine guns of the colonial forces.



January 20, 1934

There is a Fascist movement in America. It is small. It is inconspicuous. It lacks popular protagonists. It has no spokesmen in the accredited capitalist press. It is unknown to most American workers. It does not possess state power and is not represented in any governmental office.

But it is growing and it disposes of finances, freely given from some undivulged source.

To our knowledge, the outstanding Fascist organization in the United States is the Silver Shirts of America with headquarters at Asheville, North Carolina. The literature and form of organization of this outfit, the men in the leadership and the people in back of it, give us the impression that the Silver Shirts are no fly-by-night gathering like the late but unlamented Khaki Shirts of Philadelphia.

after their arrests for breaking the U.S. "Neutrality" Act. A U.S. Coast Guard ship intercepted a yacht they were on that carried arms for the Rebel Army in Cuba.

Obama. Emanuel officially resigned January 2 and a couple days later Governor Rod Blagojevich set April 7 as the date for a special election.

Addressing a meeting of campaign supporters on December 20 Farley said, "I am launching this campaign because of the depth of the growing economic crisis, the beginnings of workers' resistance, and the necessity for a workers' voice to bring the only solution to the crisis that can work—strengthening the fight of the working class to take power."

Farley said that since the beginning of 2008 over 2 million jobs in the United States have been cut. Unemployment in Illinois is 7.3 percent. In East St. Louis, which has an overwhelmingly Black working-class population, unemployment stands at 15.3 percent.

She said that Chicago mayor Richard M. Daley raised taxes and fines \$330 million and laid off hundreds of workers during the last several months of 2008.

On January 2 she joined a demonstration of some 4,000 here protesting the Israeli invasion of Gaza. The youthful, majority Palestinian crowd rallied in front of the *Chicago Tribune* building and marched to the Israeli consulate.

A statement issued by Farley condemned the Israeli invasion and demanded an end to the bombing attacks on Gaza and a withdrawal of all troops.

"Washington's support for Tel Aviv assault is completely bipartisan. . . . Under the banner of the 'global war on terrorism' the U.S. rulers seek to defend their class interests in the Middle East and worldwide," the statement said.

Communist leadership and revolution

New book by Fidel Castro contrasts course of ‘prolonged guerrilla warfare’ to C

Reprinted below are the introduction and epilogue to a new book by former Cuban president Fidel Castro, *La paz en Colombia* (Peace in Colombia). It attracted worldwide interest upon its release in Havana in mid-November by Editora Política, and presentation the next day at the Venezuela International Book Fair in Caracas. Castro develops and explains more fully the points he made in two articles, written July 3 and July 5, immediately after an operation in which Colombian army troops freed 15 hostages held by guerrillas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) on July 2. Among those hostages were Ingrid Betancourt, kidnapped by the FARC while campaigning for president six years ago; three U.S. citizens; and 11 Colombian soldiers.

In his reflections, published in *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, Castro reiterated his opposition to U.S. imperialist intervention in Colombia. He also explained his longstanding disagreement with the political course followed by Manuel Marulanda, the central leader of the FARC until his death last year, and the Communist Party of Colombia, of which Marulanda was a member for many years.

Castro said that Marulanda “conceived a lengthy and prolonged struggle,” noting that he “had started his armed resistance 60 years back.” Castro added, “I disagreed with this point of view. But I never had the chance to talk with him.”

Following the March 1952 coup that overthrew the elected government of Cuba, the revolutionary movement led by Castro organized to defeat the military and police forces of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista as rapidly as possible and establish a popular revolutionary government. The fall of the Batista regime on Jan. 1, 1959, came barely five and a half years after the first armed action of the revolutionary struggle—the assault on the Moncada garrison in Santiago de Cuba. The victory was won in just over two years from the Rebel Army’s first battle with Batista’s troops on Dec. 5, 1956.

But in Colombia, Castro noted, the

For further reading...

The First and Second Declarations of Havana

These 1960s indictments of imperialist plunder and “the exploitation of man by man” continue to stand as manifestos of revolutionary struggle by working people the world over. —\$10

New International, issue 9: The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution

Based on ten years of socialist journalism from inside Nicaragua, this issue of *New International* magazine recounts the achievements and worldwide impact of the Nicaraguan revolution. —\$16

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Council of State Office of Historical Affairs

Fidel Castro, front, leads Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra mountains of Cuba. Cuban revolutionaries’ objective was to lead workers and peasants to power as swiftly as possible.

Colombian Communist Party, which “was under the influence of the Communist Party of the USSR and not of Cuba . . . never contemplated the idea of conquering power through the armed struggle. The guerrilla was a resistance front and not the essential instrument for conquering revolutionary power as had been the case in Cuba.”

Castro also expressed his strong disagreement with two other policies of the FARC: the treatment of prisoners and the taking of civilian hostages.

During the revolutionary war in Cuba, the Rebel Army released captured government soldiers “immediately,” and “absolutely unconditionally,” taking only their weapons. “No soldier will ever put down his arms if he thinks he will be killed or subjected to cruel treatment,” Castro wrote.

The civilians held by the FARC “should have never been kidnapped, nor should the soldiers have been kept as prisoners in jungle conditions,” wrote Castro. “These were objectively cruel actions. No revolutionary aim could justify them.”

Reaffirming that Cuba would “never support the *pax romana* that the empire tries to impose on Latin America,” and was not calling on the FARC to lay down its arms, Castro noted that the goal of establishing a “real peace, albeit remote and difficult” remained the “one way out” in Colombia. This is the option, he said, “that for three decades Cuba has advocated for that nation.”

A more complete account of the two articles was printed in the July 28, 2008, edition of the *Militant*. Both reflections, published under the titles “The True Story and the Challenge for Cuban Journalists,” and “*Pax Romana*,” are available at www.granma.cu/ingles.

The 16 chapters of *Peace in Colombia* are a record of the policies of the Cuban Revolution and the actions of its leadership. The book includes excerpts of key documents of the Cuban Revolution, such as the First and Second Declarations of Havana, along with excerpts from books by participants in the guerrilla movement in Colombia, and details on Cuban participation in negotiations between the Colombian government and guerrilla groups in attempts to end the armed conflict.

The entire book is available on line in Spanish at www.cubadebate.cu. An

English translation will be released shortly by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba.

The footnotes below as well as the translation of the introduction and epilogue are by the *Militant*.



BY FIDEL CASTRO

This is a topic I promised to write about. It was not easy to do. Other responsibilities have taken up my time. Now I am fulfilling my promise.

Was my analysis of Marulanda and the Communist Party of Colombia published in my Reflection of July 5, 2008, objective and fair? No one can ever be certain his point of view is completely free of subjectivity; one always runs the risk of seeming to be unfair. Whoever affirms anything must be willing to demonstrate what he says and why he says it.

My disagreement with Marulanda’s conception is based on living experience, not as a theoretician but as a political person who confronted and had to resolve very similar problems, both as a citizen and a guerrilla, although Marulanda’s problems were more complex and difficult.

It would be incorrect to think that Colombia and Cuba began with the same set of conditions. We did share an initial absence of a revolutionary ideology—since nobody is born with it—and of a program to later bring about the construction of socialism. I do not question at all the integrity either of him or of the Communist Party of Colombia; to the contrary, they are worthy of respect because they were revolutionaries, anti-imperialist fighters, a cause to which they devoted dozens of years of struggle. I will explain.

When the respected and popular leader Jorge Eliécer Gaitán¹ was assassinated on April 9, 1948, Pedro Antonio

Marín, a poor peasant who later took the name Manuel Marulanda in honor of a Colombian who died in the Korean War, joined the Liberal Party’s guerrilla movement. He was only eighteen years old.

There are few accounts of his life, although enough to satisfy the curiosity of a reader who wants to get a rough idea of the facts. I have looked into various sources. The most systematic treatment was by Arturo Alape, the famous Colombian historian, whose investigative rigor I can attest to, owing to his relations with me. It is difficult to imagine even a single detail escaping him. He met with Marulanda and the guerrilla forces many times. He spent months with them scrutinizing the motives and objectives of their difficult struggle. I can vouch for the accuracy of his information.

But that is not the only source. We also have the accounts of Jacobo Arenas², an intellectual and Communist leader assigned by his party to the peasant sector, which is an essential component of the revolution in Colombia.

The Communist Party of that sister country, like the other Communist parties in Latin America, large or small, were disciplined members of the International while it formally existed. They followed the line of the Communist Party of the USSR. During the Cold War they continued suffering repression on account of their ideas. The imperialist and oligarchic media unleashed its fury on them. The rise of the Cuban Revolu-

“The civilians held by the FARC should have never been kidnapped. These were objectively cruel actions. No revolutionary aim could justify them...”

tion, with absolutely no ties to the USSR but based on the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, stirred up contradictory, although not antagonistic feelings. In our country we overcame these and forged a unity, although not without contradictions or sectarian feelings between the members and sympathizers of the old party with advanced political education, and sectors of the petty bourgeoisie who were radicalized but were permeated with the phantom of anticommunism. The victories of the Rebel Army, as the

to learn from and emulate the Bolshevik leadership of the October Revolution, was founded in Moscow in March 1919 under the leadership of V.I. Lenin. By the late 1920s, a privileged caste of which Joseph Stalin was the main spokesperson had won control of party and government, reversing the proletarian course of Lenin at home and internationally. The “old party” Castro refers to is the Popular Socialist Party (PSP), the pro-Moscow party in Cuba. The Rebel Army was the guerrilla force headed by Fidel Castro and members of the July 26 Movement. After the rebel victory, the July 26th Movement fused with the PSP and the Revolutionary Directorate, eventually becoming the Communist Party of Cuba.

1. Jorge Eliécer Gaitán, a leader of the opposition Liberal Party, was assassinated in Bogotá on April 9, 1948. The city erupted in a mass popular uprising known as the *Bogotazo*.
2. A leader of the Communist Party of Colombia, Jacobo Arenas became one of the central figures in the FARC.
3. The Communist International, which brought together revolutionary organizations from around the world that sought
4. Lázaro Cárdenas, president of Mexico

meritary strategy today

Cuban example of taking political power

guerrilla forces were initially called, were the decisive factor in the subsequent phase of the revolution. This explanation is necessary for understanding the essence of the relations between Cuba and the revolutionaries of Latin America.³

We who organized the movement that sought to take power on July 26, 1953, had a clear idea of our objectives, and this remained constant. The combatants came from the poor layers of our people, and none of them were opposed to our aims; the old party was our friend, even before that attack. Everyone who fought against the tyranny contributed to a common cause.

Out of the singular experience on a small island 90 miles from the United States, with a military base imposed on its own territory, came our viewpoints regarding Latin America. We did not have, however, the right to interfere in the internal affairs of any other country apart from the inevitable impact of events. Unfortunately, the governments of the other countries—with the exception of Mexico, still under the influence of its social revolution at the beginning of the century and the brilliant patriotic and anti-imperialist role of Lázaro Cárdenas—under U.S. pressure, broke both moral standards and legal principles to join in the aggression against Cuba.⁴ They exploited the existence of revolutionary Cuba in order to get crumbs from imperialism. Anyone who resisted was simply overthrown without further ado.

The United States organized armed groups and terrorist groups supplied by air and sea. They planted bombs, burned social and economic installations, including theaters, child-care centers, factories, sugar plantations, warehouses, department stores and other targets, snuffing out lives or maiming Cubans through their traitorous actions. Even teachers and young literacy instructors were tortured and murdered. This isn't just my opinion; they are recounted in declassified CIA documents. One outstanding and notorious fact, known to all, is that on April 15, 1961, combat aircraft and installations of our air force were attacked by planes with Cuban insignia; two days later, mercenary forces backed by the U.S. Navy—including an aircraft carrier—and the Marines, landed at the Bay of Pigs. What did the governments of the Americas, with the exception of Mexico, do? They supported the United States in its genocidal war against the Cuban people.

Later the CIA launched viral and bacteriological attacks against our population and our plantations. What did the

governments of our sister countries do?

The U.S. government pushed the world to the brink of nuclear war, because they refused to give up the idea of a direct attack on Cuba, using its powerful military. That would have cost an incalculable loss in lives and destruction, since, the Cuban people, as is well known, would have resisted to the last drop of blood.

When the Dominican Republic was invaded in April 1965, the governments of Latin America again supported the aggressors.⁵

It is not necessary to add anything more in order to understand that this was the conduct of the military dictatorships that tortured, murdered, and disappeared hundreds of thousands of people in this hemisphere, in complicity with the empire that encouraged them.

“In Colombia the guerrilla was a resistance front and not an essential instrument for conquering power as had been the case in Cuba...”

From the earliest days, in mass rallies, the Cuban people sent their message, in the First and Second Declarations of Havana, to the fraternal peoples of Latin America. Starting from this reality, one can understand the interest with which we follow political developments in every country in Our America.⁶

I have reviewed numerous notes, reports, and documents relating to Colombia, among them summaries of conversations with individuals who visited Cuba, with whom we had extensive exchanges on the question of peace in Colombia.

In 1950, when a Communist guerrilla made contact with him, Marulanda, who came out of a Gaitanist Liberal group made up in part by his relatives, had evolved toward positions close to the Communists; he criticized them for excessive military formalism and for specific sectarian tendencies in their conception.

Our idea of the guerrilla force as the developing embryo of a force capable of taking power is not based only on the Cuban experience but also on that of other Latin American countries. In all of them the struggles would be carried out by the poor, independently of their level of education, which everywhere, as the exploited classes—worker or peasant, simple day laborers or even soldiers—it was very low.

In Central America, a region victimized by interventions by U.S. filibusterers or soldiers at many different times,

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7. From 1849 to 1861, armed expeditions by “filibusters” to Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean were conducted in an effort to grab territory and expand the power of southern U.S. slaveholding interests. One of the most notorious was William Walker, who landed in Nicaragua in 1855 and made himself president of the country in 1856 before being defeated by Central American armies.
8. Democrat James Carter was U.S. president from 1977 to 1981. Robert Pastor



Rebel Army hands over prisoners from Batista's army to Red Cross in the summer of 1958. Captured government soldiers were released immediately and unconditionally.

nearly all the countries were governed by bloody dictatorships at the time of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution.⁷ Without exception, they were accomplices and instruments of imperialism against Cuba.

In their struggle the revolutionary groups in Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Guatemala were divided. Sooner or later members of the Communist Party joined the armed struggle of the peasants and the revolutionary petty bourgeoisie. In all of them, with their specific and inevitable characteristics always present, tendencies arose that held to a conception of excessively prolonged struggle. Cuba's efforts were aimed at achieving unity. The meetings and photos of the historic moments in which unity was achieved attest to this. There were guerrillas who wasted years planning victories for the Greek calends. This was a conception that never entered our minds. It is equally true that the eternal fanatical advocates of capitalism, managed by the Yankee intelligence services, planted extremist ideas in the minds of some revolutionaries.

Central America was the site of a clash of ideas. I remember that during the Carter years, Bob Pastor, a representative of his who made numerous visits to our country, more than once when meeting with me exclaimed, in a way that seemed naive, “And why do you insist so much on unity, unity, unity?” I smiled to myself when I observed the allergic reaction of this young U.S. official to the unity of Latin Americans. Carter, nevertheless, was an unusual U.S. president, with ethical principles rooted in his religious faith, and did not plan assassination attempts against Castro. That is why I always treated him with respect. Under his presidency, Torrijos succeeded in winning sovereignty over the Canal, avoiding the kind of massacre that Bush Senior later carried out.⁸

The history of Central America would

was Carter's national security adviser on Latin America. Gen. Omar Torrijos Herrera, head of the Panamanian National Guard and the dominant figure in the government there for 13 years, signed pacts in 1977 that led to control of the Panama Canal being returned to Panama, Dec. 31, 1999. Torrijos died in a 1981 plane crash. In December 1989, during the administration of U.S. president George H.W. Bush, Washington invaded Panama and overthrew the government of Gen. Manuel Noriega.

require a book that perhaps someone will write one day. The revolution triumphed in Nicaragua, which meant hope. Reagan launched the dirty war that cost thousands of lives in that country; in Europe he killed the Siberian gas pipeline project in complicity with Thatcher and the rest of NATO; he put the USSR into an irremediable crisis and liquidated the socialist camp. An entirely new situation was created.⁹

A short time ago I was listening to Tarek William, an outstanding Venezuelan poet and today governor of Anzoátegui, the richest of Venezuela's petroleum states, and he said that they had named one of their social projects after Roque Dalton, prestigious poet and revolutionary, member of the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary People's Army], assassinated under strange circumstances in El Sal-



Fidel Castro (left) in Bogota, Colombia, after having taken part in the Bogotazo, a mass uprising in April 1948 in response to assassination of Colombian opposition leader.

vador. With sadness he gave the name of the presumed assassin. “It causes me great pain,” he stated, “when the Yankees send him here to tell us how we should do things in Venezuela.” I really knew nothing about the shameful act that Tarek accused him of. I knew this individual when he was a militant and leader of the ERP, a noted revolutionary

Continued on page 8

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9. On July 19, 1979, the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) led working people in Nicaragua in a popular revolution that took power out of the hands of the U.S.-backed Somoza dictatorship and established a workers and farmers government. Washington trained, financed, and armed a counterrevolutionary army that murdered thousands of workers and peasants there before being defeated. The FSLN leadership, however, retreated from a proletarian course, and the workers and farmers government no longer existed by the time the FSLN lost the presidential elections in February 1990.

from 1934 to 1940, nationalized the Mexican oil industry in 1938 backed by massive mobilizations of working people.

5. In April 1965 U.S. marines invaded the Dominican Republic to block a popular uprising against a pro-imperialist military regime.
6. In 1960 and 1962 million-strong assemblies of the Cuban people adopted the First and Second Declarations of Havana, which took up the key questions of revolutionary strategy in the fight against imperialist plunder and class exploitation, culminating in the fight for power.

Eartha Kitt: opposed Vietnam War

BY SAM MANUEL

Eartha Kitt died December 25. She was one of the most talented African American female recording, stage, and screen artists who overcame both racist and sexist barriers in Hollywood and the recording industry. Her screen performances included leading roles with Sidney Poitier, Sammy Davis Jr., and Nat King Cole. She won two Emmy awards, was nominated for a third, and also nominated for two Tonys and a Grammy.

She was also subjected to blacklisting and an FBI investigation after she spoke her mind at a White House luncheon in the middle of the Vietnam War.

Kitt started life on a poor sharecropper's cotton farm in South Carolina. She was sent north to live with relatives in a Harlem tenement and helped support her aunt and herself working long hours in a sewing factory that made uniforms.

The young Kitt showed talent at singing and dancing and got her first break

with the Katherine Dunham Dance Troupe, touring the world with the famous company of Black female dancers. Her travels heightened her interest in world events and peoples in other lands. Her album, *That Bad Eartha*, released by RCA in 1955, featured selections sung in English, French, Spanish, Turkish, and Swahili.

Kitt came under government and entertainment industry attack following her attendance at a Jan. 18, 1968, White House luncheon. She then would be forced to pursue her career in Europe until the late 1970s when she returned to the United States.

The gathering, given by Lady Bird Johnson, was to promote an "anticrime" campaign which then-president Lyndon Johnson had featured in his "State of the Union" address the previous evening.

The president himself made brief remarks at the luncheon. As he was leaving, Kitt interrupted to ask what he

would do about parents who had to work and were too busy to provide adequate care for their children. The president tried to brush her off saying his new social security bill would help.

After the remaining speakers finished, Kitt took the floor in the discussion saying, "Young people and their parents are angry because they are being so highly taxed and there's a war going on. . . . You send the best of this country off to be shot and maimed. They rebel in the streets."

Lady Bird Johnson's voiced trembled, tears welling in her eyes, according to a *New York Post* report, as she attempted to respond.

Afterwards Kitt told reporters her



Kitt's album *That Bad Eartha* was widely popular during the civil rights movement that smashed Jim Crow segregation.

impression of Johnson. "I'm afraid she became a little flustered," Kitt said. Regarding her own remarks she answered with her trademark confidence—"I see nothing wrong with the way I handled myself. I can only hope it will do some good."

Communist leadership and revolutionary strategy today

Continued from page 7

organization, combative and firm, with magnificent fighters from the people. The allusions to the death of Roque Dalton had seemed to be simple slanders. I personally devoted dozens of hours to transmitting experiences, ideas, tactics and principles of war to him. He did not waiver in applying them. The units of the ERP fought Salvadoran battalions trained in the United States using the most advanced techniques. I insisted to them: do not execute prisoners, do not finish off the wounded, overcome these stupid and sterile practices because otherwise not one of them will ever surrender. I should add that the arms with which the Salvadoran revolutionaries fought had been seized in Saigon and given to Cuba by Vietnam after the victory. As will be seen in chapter 9, revolutionary militants of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) carried out feats unprecedented in the liberation struggles in Latin America, if one takes into account the number of men and the firing capacity of modern arms.¹⁰

With the USSR and the socialist camp gone, with the Nicaraguan Revolution defeated electorally because of the bloody dirty war imposed by Washington, the time came for the other Central American movements to make a decision. They asked my opinion. "Only you can decide," was my answer, "I only know what Cuba would do." I will add here that the previously mentioned head of the ERP received a scholarship to Oxford to study political science and economics. From what the governor of Anzoátegui said, he is now a Yankee adviser on the art of revolutionary governing.

The Cuban people withstood the disappearance of the USSR without surren-

dering and were willing to fight to the end, in order that—as Rubén Martínez Villena said—their children won't have to beg on their knees for what their parents conquered on their feet.¹¹

From the material that has been collected and analyzed, a short book has emerged. Its chapters are about of equal length, although some are longer and some are shorter. We did not want the form to determine the content. Texts that are essential for understanding the problems are included. I use the method of selecting basic ideas as found in the documents.

Making available the basic data is a responsibility of those who really struggle for a better and fairer world.



EPILOGUE

The objective realities of which Belisario Betancur spoke led Pastrana to what he no doubt did not desire when

11. Rubén Martínez Villena (1899–1934), a poet and member of the Cuban Communist Party, was active in opposing the dictatorship of Gerardo Machado.

he assumed the presidency of Colombia for his four-year term between 1998 and 2002.¹²

The United States is not a friend of the peoples of Latin America. For more than a century and a half it intervened in Latin America's internal affairs, stole its territory, robbed its natural resources, attacked its culture, imposed unequal trade, sabotaged unity efforts going back to the era of independence, promoted conflicts between our countries, exploited the great differences in the heart of our societies. The nations of Latin America have suffered waves of inflation and economic crisis while other parts of the world developed. Despite emigration, the number of people in extreme poverty rose, as has the number of children compelled to beg in the big cities.

During the last fifty years, military

12. Belisario Betancur was president of Colombia from 1982 to 1986. Andrés Pastrana was president from August 1998 to 2002. Both were backed by the Conservative Party. Pastrana engaged in direct negotiations with the FARC rebels.

coups and bloody tyrannies, supported and encouraged by the United States, have meant hundreds of thousands of "disappeared," tortured, and murdered in Central and South America. The coup plotters and torturers were trained in U.S. military schools.

Despite the seriousness of the crime committed against the people of the United States by the terrorist act in New York on September 11, 2001—putting aside the responsibility of the President for his negligence and the deficiencies of his government's security bodies—there is no justification for supporting the war Bush declared against "sixty or more dark corners of the world," among which Latin American countries could be included.

Pastrana, who met often with the guerrilla commander, no doubt could sense the difference between Marulanda's sincerity and Bush's cynicism. Peace with Bush and war against Marulanda are two completely opposite things.

The problem of drugs, which today causes so much pain to the peoples of Latin America, in reality originates with

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For a democratic, secular Palestine

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estinians. The goal was to have a firm ally in the Middle East for the imperialist powers that would keep the Arab masses in line.

In 2005 Israel withdrew its occupation troops and settlers from Gaza and the West Bank and permitted the Palestinian Authority to take over local government. But Tel Aviv rejects any moves toward genuine self-determination for the Palestinians, be it the right to return to their land or the right to be treated as equals in employment, land use, and religious and cultural freedom.

The fact that more than 60 years after its founding, the state of Israel has to once again go to war to maintain its forcible expulsion of the Palestinian majority is one more confirmation of its failure as the “promised land” for Jews. Israel can only survive by continuing to fight the Palestinian people.

The regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan have been complicit with Israel in its Gaza attack, blaming Hamas for the Israeli assault. Fatah, the Palestinian group Hamas ousted from power in Gaza in 2006, has broken up demonstrations in solidarity with Gaza by Palestinians on the West Bank.

The challenge facing working people in Pales-

tine—Arab and Jew—is how to organize an effective fight against the Israeli rulers. That course, the fight for a democratic, secular Palestine, would represent a mortal threat to the Arab bourgeois regimes in the region as well—a course once embraced by the Fatah-led Palestine Liberation Organization.

Neither Fatah nor Hamas are leading a fight along these lines today and block the capacity of Palestinian workers and farmers to mobilize in an effective fight to win back their land and their rights.

A road forward can come only out of the response of new generations of working people and youth in the fight for land, jobs, unions, the release of political prisoners, an end to discriminatory laws, for the rights of women, and ultimately against capitalist rule itself. Such a course could unite and mobilize both Palestinian and Jewish workers and farmers. A democratic, secular Palestine offers the only realistic solution to the permanent conflict world imperialism imposed back in 1948 on the working people of the Middle East. Fighting today to get the Israeli troops out of Gaza and to end the economic blockade are key steps toward opening political space for the workers and youth in the occupied territories and in Israel itself to a new generation of fighters.

Worldwide production slides, jobs cut

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company will lay off thousands of temporary workers in Japan. Overall, Japan’s exports plummeted by 27 percent in November.

The drop in Japan was mirrored in other Asian countries, with exports in Thailand falling by 19 percent and exports from Taiwan by 23 percent. In South Korea, exports dropped by more than 17 percent in the last year.

Every industry surveyed in the United States reported a drop in production in December, except two, apparel and leather goods, which remained at the same level as November.

One of the most dramatic contractions is in the world steel industry, which is now reacting to plummeting auto sales, housing starts, and appliance purchases. About 57 percent of steel bought in the United States goes into construction or autos, according to the American Iron and Steel Institute; 13 percent goes into appliances and machinery.

U.S. steel companies were raking in record profits in the first nine months of 2008. But now the price of a ton of steel has dropped by half, according to the *New York Times*. Output has declined to 1 million tons a week from 2 million in August. U.S. mills are operating at 43 percent capacity.

The world’s largest steel company, ArcelorMittal, is closing two plants in the United States and axing 9,000 jobs worldwide. The company is shutting down

its finished steel processing plant in Lackawanna, outside Buffalo, New York, and a similar plant in Hennepin, Illinois, eliminating 545 jobs. Both plants mainly produce for the auto industry.

U.S. Steel is idling its Great Lakes mill outside Detroit and its Granite City mill in Granite City, Illinois, as well as an iron ore mining and pelletizing facility in Keewatin, Minnesota. About 3,500 workers will be laid off. There is no date to reopen.

U.S. Steel is the largest employer in the town of Granite City. The third largest employer in town is Amsted Rail, a steel foundry. Amsted will lay off about half its workforce—363 workers—in February.

The Allegheny Ludlum plant in Midland, Pennsylvania, which produces stainless steel, was hiring as of last August. Since then orders dropped 50 percent below projections. Now all but 10 of the workers—who numbered 230—have been laid off.

Steel bosses are asking the White House to include them in the “economic stimulus” legislation that is supposed to contain infrastructure projects that would require steel. The CEO of Nucor Corporation, Daniel DiMicco, said he would lobby for “a recovery program that has in every provision a ‘buy America’ clause.”

As factory layoffs mount in the United States, Blacks are hit hardest. Unemployment for Blacks went up 2.8 percent in the last year, compared to a 2 percent rise in the population as whole.

— LETTERS —

Shelley Davis

Shelley Davis, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in the 1970s and ’80s, died Dec. 12, 2008, in Washington, D.C.

I worked with Shelley, both as the director of the Political Rights Defense Fund and as a fellow member of the SWP. She was part of the legal team in the fight to successfully prosecute the FBI and other government agencies for decades of spying, wiretapping, use of informers, and disruption against the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance.

Before, during, and after joining the PRDF staff, Shelley was an active member of the SWP and YSA and participated in the movement’s many political cam-

paigns. Like a number of other party members who lived with physical disabilities—Shelley was legally blind—she fought to get a job in industry and join one of the party’s union fractions. In Chicago she tried to secure a job in the garment industry, to work and fight alongside sewing machine operators who faced growing attacks by the employers. Though

‘Militant’ Prisoners’ Fund

The Prisoners’ Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked “Prisoners’ Fund” to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

this proved not to be possible, and Shelley eventually decided to resign from the SWP, she continued to identify with working-class struggles throughout her life.

For the last two decades of her life, Shelley was an advocate and legal representative for the rights of farm workers and their organizations, becoming the deputy director of Farmworker Justice.

John Studer

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Colombia

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the enormous demand in the United States, where the authorities have never decided to combat it energetically while assigning this task solely to the countries where poverty and underdevelopment push masses of peasants into cultivating the coca leaf or poppies instead of coffee, cacao, or other products undervalued in the U.S. market.

It was not in vain that Raúl Reyes told Arbesú that the State Department contacted the FARC, interested in collaborating with it in the fight against drugs. “It was the only thing that interested them,” said Reyes. We can add that when they wanted their “collaboration” the FARC weren’t terrorists!¹³

Marulanda advocated replacing these crops with others, along with social programs and economic compensation. With great realism, he did not see any other way to eliminate them.

This is what Cuba did with illicit crops when the Revolution triumphed. For many months when we were still in the mountains we did not even know what a marijuana plant looked like. The few who grew it were the most adept at going back and forth across enemy lines. Some extremists on our side wanted to begin putting the growers on trial. I recommended waiting until the war was over. That was how these kinds of crops were eradicated, although there did not exist, of course, the serious and complex problem that Colombia faces today.

Raúl Reyes and Manuel Marulanda are no longer alive. They died in the struggle. One, in a direct attack using new technology developed by the Yankees; the other from natural causes.

I disagreed with the head of the FARC over the pace he assigned to the revolutionary process in Colombia. Over his idea of excessively prolonged war. Over his conception of first creating an army of more than 30,000 men; from my point of view this was neither correct nor economically feasible as the means to defeat enemy ground forces in an irregular war. He did extraordinary things with guerrilla units that, under his personal direction, penetrated deep into enemy territory. When someone failed to complete a similar mission, he was always ready to show it was possible. He once spent two years traveling over half of Colombia with a unit of 40 men.

The FARC, because of its operational conceptions, never surrounded or forced the surrender of a full battalion backed by artillery, armored units and air power. This is an experience we did have, thus defeating even larger units of elite troops. This is not what happened with the FARC, despite the tremendous quality of its fighters.

My opposition to holding prisoners of war, to applying policies that humiliate them or subject them to extremely harsh jungle conditions, is well known. With these policies troops will never lay down their arms, even if the battle is lost. Nor was I in agreement with capturing and holding civilians who have nothing to do with the war. I must add that prisoners and hostages make maneuvering more difficult for the combatants. I admire, however, the revolutionary firmness that Marulanda showed and his willingness to fight to the last drop of blood.

The idea of surrendering never passed through the minds of any of us in the guerrilla struggle in our country. That is why I said in one of my Reflections that truly revolutionary fighters should never lay down their arms. That is what I thought 55 years ago. That is what I think today.

I invested more than 400 hours of intense labor in this effort. I revised it carefully following the two hurricanes that hit Cuba with such extreme violence. I am satisfied having done it. I learned much. I have kept my promise.

Fidel Castro Ruz

16 September 2008

13. Raul Reyes, a top commander of the FARC, was killed in an air raid when Colombian forces attacked a FARC camp near the Ecuadoran border in March 2008. Marulanda died of natural causes that same month. José Arbesú, currently deputy head of international relations for the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, represented the Cuban leadership in many meetings with FARC leaders.